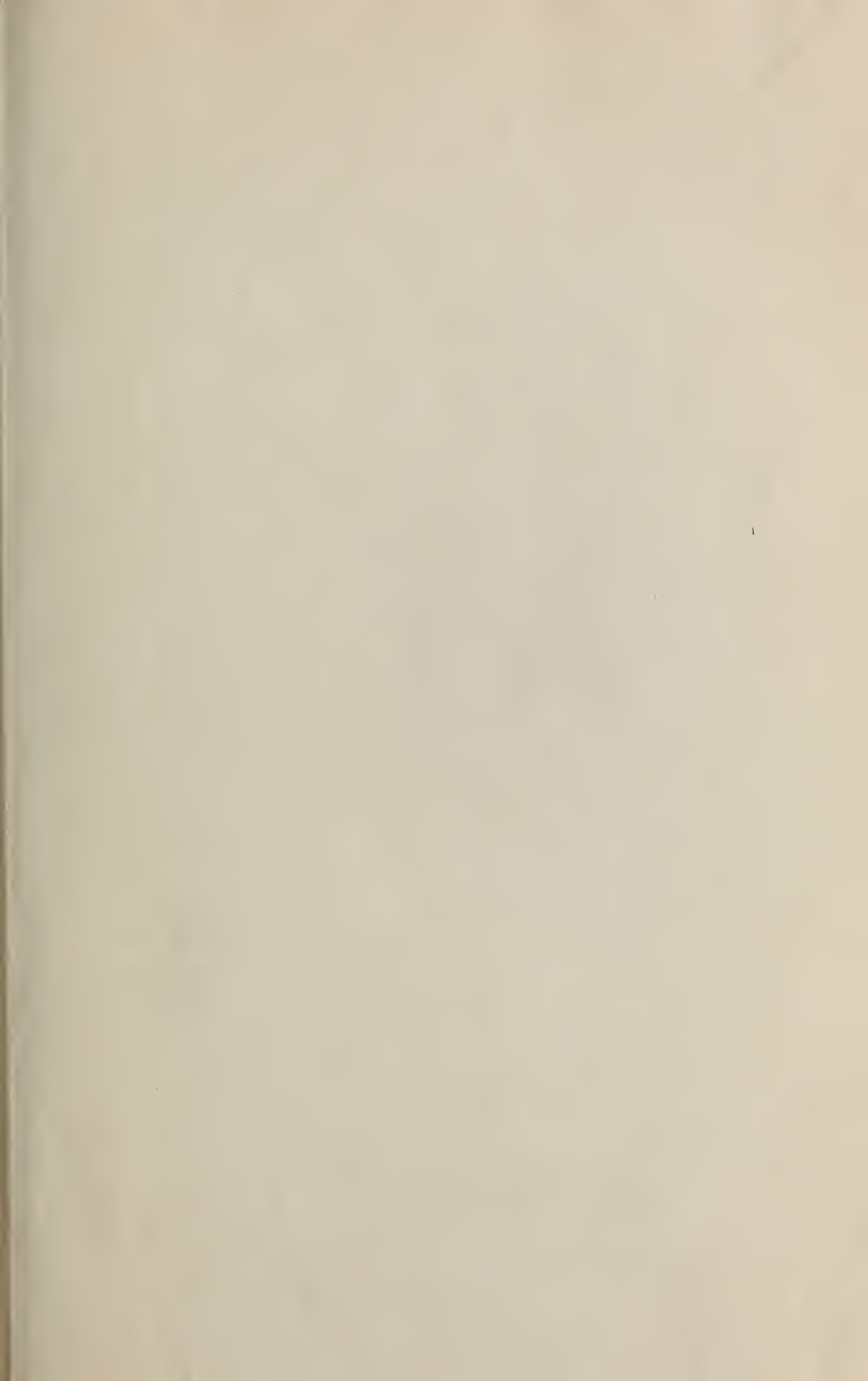


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Neglected Arabia





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A BASRAH GONDOLA

NEGLECTED ARABIA

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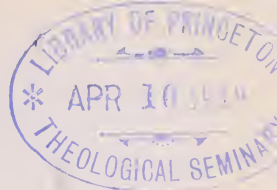
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Neglected Arabia

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In the Steps of the Great Physician

MRS. EDWIN E. CALVERLEY, M.D.

It was a great day for the Arabian Mission when the first woman missionary took her place among its membership. There were to be no women in the mission, our pioneers had decided. They thought that the field was not ready for women and that the Arabian living conditions were too hard for them. Cupid smiled when he heard that decision, for he was not of the same opinion. And then, suddenly, one of our pioneers changed his mind (though he was a man, or, *perhaps*, because he was a man), and he realized that the work needed nothing so much as the life of a certain young lady now known to you all as Mrs. Zwemer.

It was well that she, whose privilege it was to take the Word of Life to the Arab women for the first time, was a medical missionary. In this most fanatical Muhammadan country, never could she have done so much to break down the wall of prejudice and hatred had it not been for her nurse's training. Lovingly, patiently, untiringly, she ministered to her suffering Arab sisters until the opening wedge had done its work and the way was prepared for the ever widening woman's missionary work of our mission.

The Arabian Mission is now twenty-nine years old. It has on its roll besides the list of evangelistic and educational workers, the names of seven women doctors and seven trained nurses. Of these there remain available today only two doctors and three nurses, two of whom have not yet finished language study and have not yet (1918) been appointed to work. Need one say more to emphasize the urgent need for recruits?

Of the seven women doctors referred to, there were two who stayed for only a year or less and then retired. Two others have laid down their lives for Arabia, and their memorial is not so much the modest stones that mark their graves in Bahrein and Basrah, as the loving and grateful memory in the hearts of those they served. Marian Wells Thoms and Christine Iverson Bennett were splendid women. The Arab women love to tell you about them. There are



A YOUNG SHEIKH

those whose eyes still brim with tears as they tell you how these talented, unselfish women, even in their own weakness and suffering, were ever ready to forget self and to spend their strength for others.

No other woman has given so many years of medical service for Arabia as Mrs. Worrall. After sixteen years on the field she is now staying at home, superintending the education of her children. It was through her enthusiastic efforts that the mission hospital in Basrah was first opened, in the face of untold opposition. Its first beds were supplied with sheets from her personal linen closet. Those who were associated with her in Basrah remember how she toiled to meet the demands of a large and ever-increasing practice. During an epidemic of cholera I have

known her to rise at earliest break of day, before the children waked or medical calls began to come, in order to prepare a pamphlet for Arab women, teaching them prevention and first aid in combating the terrible disease raging in their midst.

Mrs. Worrall's place in Basrah was later taken by Mrs. Bennett, who carried on that, our heaviest woman's medical work, for five years, and who then succumbed to typhus fever, contracted during ministrations to sick Turkish soldiers. Shortly after her death the doors of the hospital had to be closed for lack of a doctor. In all our great America is there no woman doctor to open those doors for the Arab women of Basrah?

Of the two remaining physicians on our list, one, Dr. Hosmon, is now on furlough, and the other is working in Kuwait.

Trained nurses in Arabia have to take upon themselves many duties they never guessed would be theirs when they volunteered. Seldom can they confine themselves to the superintendence of a hospital. The great majority of Moslem women will not even permit a man doctor to see their faces, so that the nurse, if there is one, must diagnose and prescribe, as well as administer treatment. She must generally carry the responsibility of the work alone, meeting emergencies as best she can, and hoping for the day when the mission's resources in personnel will allow us to have both a woman doctor and a trained nurse to work in the same station.

Only one nurse of the seven on our roll was enabled to concentrate her efforts on nurse's work alone. This was Miss Holzhauser, who accomplished wonders in organizing the Basrah Hospital while Dr. and Mrs. Bennett were there. Miss Holzhauser was also a sufferer from typhus fever, as was Dr. Bennett himself, at the time when Mrs. Bennett died. Fortunately, she was able to resist the disease and later to return to America, but it is doubtful whether she will ever be able to attempt work in Arabia again.

When Dr. Zwemer was called to his literary work in Cairo, Arabia lost another nurse in Mrs. Zwemer. A few years later Mrs. Vogel retired from the field after seven years of service.

Mrs. Cantine, who by training is a nurse, has for some time been appointed to evangelistic work, by her own choice, but she finds frequent use for her medical knowledge and skill as she comes in contact with the women in their houses.

The mission is expecting great things of Mrs. Harrison and Miss Van Pelt when they shall have finished their language examinations. It is hard to be patient and wait two long years for a knowledge of Arabic before entering practical service, but experience has proved this to be wise.

There is still another nurse in the Arabian mission not yet mentioned, and she is the only one at present in active work. For several years Mrs. Van Peurseu superintended the Mason Memorial Hospital in Bahrein, besides taking charge of the woman's dispensary. To her is largely due the friendly and trustful attitude of women patients, so noticeable there now. At present she is carrying on, unaided, the Woman's Dispensary in Maskat. This work in Maskat was founded and built by Dr. Hosmon, and, but for Mrs. Van Peurseu, must have been closed during the doctor's furlough.

This is a meagre chronicle of the woman doctors and trained nurses of the Arabian Mission. But we must not stop here for much of the medical work for Arab women has been done by missionaries who were neither doctors nor trained nurses. At times when there has been no qualified worker to keep open the medical work, evangelistic mis-



CHILDREN OF KUWEIT

sionaries have accepted temporary medical appointments while the emergency lasted. Mrs. Mylrea, through her love for the women, and her interest in Dr. Mylrea's medical work in Kuwait, has learned to do much to relieve sickness, and has been able to take charge of the woman's department of the hospital when, but for her, the work must have been discontinued. In fact, she so won for herself a reputation for skill that some of her former patients later declined to consult the newly arrived woman doctor, preferring treatment by her whom they had already learned to trust.

Miss Lutton, too, has been appointed to medical work at times, and in fact she always has her little stock of medicines which she administers, well mixed with her ready humor, when need arrives.

Miss Scardefield has also made good use of the medicine and surgery she learned in the missionary training institute where she prepared for service in Arabia. To thousands of Arab women she has been both doctor and nurse, handling with success instruments intended only for physicians. Indeed, I suppose there is hardly a woman in our mission who has not in some degree tried her hand in treating the sick around her. It takes a stout heart to turn away sufferers unaided, when sometimes even the simplest remedies which every American housewife knows, would be sufficient to relieve distress. And you, too, gentle reader, if you should come to Arabia, I should not be surprised if you would soon learn to put drops into sore eyes, to pull teeth, and even to open an abscess, rather than turn away those who come to you for help and have nowhere else to go.

Having been introduced to the personnel of our woman's medical force, you may want to know something about the character of the work. Much of the medical effort in Arabia is still along pioneer lines. In some of the stations, however, the labor of a quarter of a century has won such a reputation that prejudice and distrust have almost disappeared. Were a medical woman to volunteer to open the closed doors of the Basrah Hospital she would be immediately besieged by rich and poor, Moslem, Christian and Jew. Opportunities for medical and surgical work of every description would be so great that she would soon find her practice a severe tax on her physical strength.

On the other hand, were she to be sent to open a dispensary in one of the more fanatical coast towns or if she were very fortunate and were allowed to settle in the heart of Arabia, that longed-for goal as yet unseen by any woman missionary, her need would not be so much for bodily strength, as for patience. She would find herself weighed in the balance with native midwives and found wanting before she had even been given a trial. She would hear of hundreds dying through the ignorance of these untaught women, and yet would not be allowed to profane the homes of the sick ones by her presence. She would be looked upon with scorn by the veiled true believers in the Prophet Muhammad, on him be prayers and peace! But after some years the women would learn to trust her and cease to fear her remedies.

It is not surprising that confidence is so hard to win. Arab women know nothing of the outside world. They have scarcely heard of the

existence of those seemingly shameless women who do not cover their faces in the presence of men. To them the greatest of all sins is unbelief in the Moslem Allah, and the Prophet Muhammad. To them we are shameless infidels. Why should they trust us? I remember in the early days at Kuwait how I sat in my dispensary day after day, waiting and wishing some patients would come. Those who did consult me were usually chronic, hopeless cases, for whom I could do little or nothing. And then, one day, a delegation of women came to my house to investigate my claims.

"Who taught you to treat sick people?" they asked. "Did your father?"

"No," was the reply.

"Well then, did your husband?"

"No."

"Then, who did teach you?"

It was not easy to explain to these women about the medical schools in our country where women can become doctors, but I tried to make them understand. So much being settled they began to investigate the extent of my qualifications.

"Can you treat eyes?" they demanded.

"Oh, yes!"

"Can you treat rheumatism?"

"Yes." I refrained from saying I could cure it.

"Can you treat abscesses?"

"Yes."

And then the object of the conversation came to light, for there was a woman among them who had an abscess. Finally, after a whispered consultation among my callers, I was given permission to treat that abscess. Not to open it, however. Oh, no! But to treat it with applications, and so I passed my first practical examination in Arabia.

If all the opposition to pioneer work were sincere, our task would be easier. The Evil One does not like to see us open a new station. As soon as we begin he starts circulating a lot of false reports about us. The Moslem leaders tell their people that we live immoral lives, that we steal little children and put them to death, or that we put poison into the wells of drinking water. We must learn to have our "good be evil spoken of."

Only last winter a woman who is now a loyal friend of ours told me of a conversation she overheard on the streets years ago, before she knew us personally. It was in regard to a woman who had been brought into the hospital with a stab wound of the lung. For a month we treated her and cared for her as tenderly as we could, but the injury had been very severe, and at last she passed away. During her dying hours we did not leave her at all, but did all we could to relieve her suffering, assuring her of Christ's love for her and of His power to save her if she would but trust Him. And yet this is the conversation which our friend heard between two women of Kuwait:

"You know Lulu, that woman who was stabbed and was taken to the American Hospital?"

"Yes."

"Well, they kept her a month and then got tired of having her around and gave her poison so that she died."

The people believe these lies about us. Why shouldn't they? Even now there are hundreds in Kuwait who have perhaps never even seen us, and yet have heard so much against us that they would die in agony rather than be treated by those whom they believe to be thoroughly wicked and unscrupulous.

When the odds against one are so great, the joy one feels in the realization of progress is correspondingly keen. The constantly increasing size of the clinics, the greater frequency of out-calls, the fact that many women are now willing to submit to surgical measures, and, best of all, that sometimes we are allowed to supplant the dirty midwife in obstetrical work, all this progress after six years of waiting is to us a source of great encouragement. Just to open the eyes of one



MRS. MYLREA AND MRS. CALVERLEY CONDUCTING GOSPEL SERVICE
AT THE DISPENSARY, KUWEIT

sightless from cataract, just to save the vision of sadly neglected babies, to set the broken bones, to bind up the burns and ulcers of the adorable little Arab children, even to pull the teeth that have ached for days and nights in a country where there is no dentist, even these physical achievements make the medical missionary's life worth while.

And yet you know and I know that we are not in Arabia primarily for medical achievements. We are here because Christ sent us to preach the Gospel by word and example. No matter what the discouragements in our work, nothing can rob us of the joy of the knowledge that we are Christ's instruments for the building up of His kingdom in the cradle of Islam. He has deigned to use us, though we be vessels of common clay, to carry His most precious gift to the women of Arabia. No matter how commonplace our duties nor how trivial our service may seem, it is He who gave the task, the results are in His hands, and the victory is sure.

My First Year's Experience

MRS. HENRY A. BILKERT

It is evident from requests of the assignment committee that a person in addition to having a certain amount of the language at the end of the first year is also supposed to have acquired something called experience. As I attempt to write down this something a hundred memories crowd before me. They are strange and varied memories and now seem but an unconnected mass. I cannot analyze them nor take a meaning from them all, much less explain them to some one else. One comes suddenly into a new land where every custom, every manner of thinking is different. Yea, everything is different from the heavens above to the earth beneath and the waters under the earth. Is not the sky like brass, the ground dry and unproductive of anything green and the water under the earth is it not salty and bad of taste! But aside from all variations of customs, all differences in living, God has fashioned the human heart the same. That is a wonderful discovery. Underneath all outward differences there is one place where we all stand alike. The common weal and woe of the human heart and soul is the strand that binds us all together. But it is for those longer in service to speak of this in full. It is for those new and untried only to make the discovery, and their experience can be related only by a few simple incidents and impressions.

Bahrein did not stir at our coming. We are probably the only ones who will remember the great day we arrived! I remember so well the first sight of the low, white-walled city. It was like being introduced to a friend you longed but dreaded to meet. The officers on the boat laughed loud and long at our stopping here. They said they wouldn't even come ashore at such a place as this. (The best joke is on them.) As I said, the city did not stir at our coming. It lay stretched out and quiet like some sleepy Arab taking his noon-day nap. We were led through what extreme imagination might term streets and I laugh now to think of my first ideas of those "crude walls." What a grand surprise to see the mission compound with its yard bordered with trees; my blessings on the one who planted them. We came to the house and I was presented to my first Arab friend, a shy little lady who smiled and took my hand. I tried not to think about her queer draped clothes, her bundled head and bare feet. But what did unnerve me was when a second later she gave a scream and a jump, grabbed her gown over her face and ducked her head behind us. I thought at least she had been hit on the head. Imagine my un-Arabic disgust at being told she was only covering her face from a man, and that man walking by a safe distance away! It is a long way from the land of suffrage parades to one where a woman must not even let on that she possesses so common a thing as a face; that is, before her august superior, MAN.

The first days here we were examined rather thoroughly. We will admit that even in America a stranger in church is usually the

center of a few curious gazes. But here a newcomer is a target. No doubt you have never been looked at from behind a mask and cannot imagine our sensations. A woman sat on the chair beside me, all covered save one eye. But oh, that eye! There it was turned on me like some merciless searchlight. I turned and smiled, I turned and looked serious, I didn't turn at all—that one black eye never relaxed its gaze! It began to be almost uncanny. As for the woman behind the eye—why she was seeing one of the new “ladies,” and it was the thing to do to look at her. What a splendid opportunity. “Wasn't she a queer thing, anyway, with her pale hair and eyes, and wasn't she ashamed to sit there with her face uncovered?” The sermon began and I listened to those new strange sounds. What miracle could ever happen to bring understanding out of that babel of words? Surely, I should never learn that sort of a language.

Later came the calls among the homes and our first experience with Arab etiquette. The first event was a real Arab breakfast, where we waited for long hours till the platters of rice and meat were at last brought on. Never had I sat so long on the floor before and my bones were full of aches. Eating with one's fingers was great joy. I believe it is something the “natural man” longs to do once in a while, a sort of a lingering desire from our previous natures, maybe. Then the women sat around and listened to the reading of the Bible. It seemed the most wonderful picture I had ever seen—those strange, dark-skinned women listening to the same “Old Story.” Surely they loved it, too. Certain things we always met in the houses. One was “helwa,” a greasy sweet, one was Arab coffee and the other was the question: “Are you married and have you any children?” They never failed. My ignorance of the language was a never-ending source of wonder and sometimes pitying scorn with them. “Not know how to talk Arabic? Why, how had she ever gotten along in life so far without talking it! What? They don't need to know Arabic in America? Nobody speaks it there? How queer. What kind of a place could America be if they don't speak Arabic there.” One thing soon impressed me—and that is the great impassable gulf between men and women here. In our calling on the women we go in the daytime when the men are away. We go to the women's quarters to be all undisturbed. Undisturbed is the word to use, for if a man happens to come within seeing distance there is much of disturbance indeed—with all the ducking of heads and grabbing of veils. Men are absolutely tabooed in our work. Only on most rare occasions do we recognize a salutation from a man. On the other hand, the men of the mission visit the men in the bazaar or call on them in their houses in the evening. Then a woman is never seen. For a missionary and his wife to call together on an Arab and his wife is as improbable as to talk by wireless with people on the moon.

At first, all the women seemed alike to me. Clothed in their long black abbas and veils there didn't seem to be any difference between them all. Now I can distinguish some of them at a distance, and just as I have learned their outward appearance so I have come to learn

their own lives. I learned the story of M——, our Bible woman; how she heard the message for the first time some sixteen years ago when she earned her living by carrying huge skins of water strapped to her back; how she felt the sin in her life and came up from the position of concubine and other vice to a life of Christian following. No one who has ever heard M—— pray for forgiveness and courage and freedom of soul has ever doubted that she is a child of God. Her steadfastness through persecution and her childlike faith have put us to shame. There was R—— who was driven from home and child because of the Gospel. Beaten and divorced by a cruel husband and scorned by a fanatical mother she has yet dared to take her stand with the hated Christians. There was U——, who named her son "the beggar" to fool the evil eye. Married at the age of nine she knew very little but the hard things of life. A sick boy was the means of bringing her to the hospital and in contact with the missionaries she has learned to love, and through them she has learned also to love the Christ she dare not confess. I think of Z——, who seemed to love the songs and reading and all. But one day she disappeared and we have not seen her since. She told the women that the "jinn" had called her and she must go. She believed she had jinn, and that when the other jinn called her jinn she had to let them obey. Poor, ignorant girl! And so it goes—as I come to know them I find each has her own story. And somehow our wonderful Christian message can and must meet them all. But it is hardest to think of all the many who do not feel any need, who do not care to think about themselves or their sins. Then there are those who know but who dare not make the break, and we who have never had to face such sacrifice, such possibilities, such risk, what shall we say? How wonderful to be able to turn them to One who made the complete sacrifice and counted not His life dear.

The people of Arabia are like their country. How barren and dry it is, and yet here and there out of the barrenness bubble up springs of pure, sweet water. Whence these pure, cool springs? The secret is this: In the heart of Arabia among the green hills are streams, the sources, and nourished well by the rains of the mountains they make their way underneath the ground all unseen until far from their head they come up into the light and pour forth their riches onto the hard, dry sand. Outside the lives of the Arabs seem hard and barren; there seems no good in them. Yet out of their hearts, way down beneath their exterior, issue unseen sources of good and kindness. God is not without witness of His truth even in the hearts of the Arabs. The best, the highest we can do for them is to increase in them the thirst for the "Water of Life." My first year in this land has shown me the vast work only yet begun and sometimes it seems unsurmountable. Yet one who works in such a land is forced back to God's promises, and we believe that by His Holy Spirit the time will come when even in Arabia "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."



The First Visit to Dohah

REV. G. J. PENNINGS

Upon examining a map of the Persian Gulf, you will notice in the southwest corner a large tongue-shaped piece of land projecting into the gulf for some seventy miles in a northerly direction. It is the Peninsula of Katar. In the gulf formed between this peninsula and the coast of Arabia, which here runs in a northwesterly direction, lies the Island of Bahrein. The northernmost point of Bahrein lies about twenty-five miles straight west of the northernmost point of Katar, Cape Rukan. On the eastern shore of the Katar peninsula, and about sixty miles south of Cape Rukan, lies the city of Dohah. It is to this place that Dr. Harrison and I made the first missionary visit in the early days of last summer. True, Dr. Harrison had been to the place about three years before, but at that time the Turks were still in control. He was hardly allowed to land, and after he had been ashore but a few minutes he was unceremoniously and expeditiously hustled back to his boat and the captain ordered to return to Bahrein at once. This time conditions were entirely different. The fame of the Bahrein medical work had extended even to this remote place, so that the sheikh, Abdallah bin Jasim, had sent Dr. Harrison a personal invitation to come.

When we began our journey we had full need of the amount of patience normally required by anyone who starts off on a trip in an Arab sailboat. We had been told to be on hand at sunrise. Instead, we took the precaution to come about an hour later, only to find that the captain was not yet on hand, so that it was fully an hour and a half later before we actually hoisted sail, and then only because we hurried them up. All we did, however, was to sail round a small point of land, after which we dropped anchor and lay till 4:00 P. M. The main passenger who was to make the trip with us had spent the day finishing his business, we were told afterwards. They might have told us that in the morning, saving us a tiresome day on the boat

within sight of our house, but the Easterner prefers to say what will please his hearer at the moment, even though he have to lie, leaving to the further and unknown future whatever unpleasant consequences his untruth may have for himself or his hearers. There may be some real philosophy at the bottom of this attitude, for misfortunes are often better born in retrospect than in prospect. However, patience was at last rewarded when our passenger came in the late afternoon, and when once started the wind was favorable, so that we reached Dohah after a twenty-four hours' sail, having traveled about one hundred miles.

We were surprised at the size of Dohah. Here in the midst of a hopelessly barren desert, without trees, shrubs, or even signs of grass, stands a city of some 10,000 inhabitants or more. It extends for over a mile along the shore of a bay in the shape of a semi-circle. Like Kuwait, the city consists of a collection of compactly-built gray houses,



THE SHORELINE AT BAHREIN

evidently composed of material dug out of the surrounding desert. On a little eminence to the right of the city are the remnants of the dilapidated Turkish barracks where a small Turkish garrison used to drag out its miserable existence.

We landed early enough to allow us to pay our compliments to the sheikh, though his castle was the extreme other end of the town from where we landed. The sheikh, a portly man of about middle age, received us with true Arab hospitality and insisted upon our staying and sharing the evening meal with him. It consisted of the usual plentiful and delicious supply of rice and mutton such as is served in sheikhly households. But we were appointed quarters in the establishment of the very man who had come with us from Bahrein, and who had been the cause of the tiresome delay. We were now glad that we had restrained our impatience and had accepted his profuse

apologies at the time, even though inwardly we had felt otherwise. He proved to be a thoughtful and generous host for the length of our stay, and we soon forgot the tiresome wait he had caused us in the beginning.

The population of the city consists of the mixture common to all gulf ports of eastern Arabia. There are Persians from across the gulf, Baharanas (Shiah Arabs), negroes, both slave and free, and Arabs, who form the bulk of the population. When we inquire with amazement whence this large multitude in the midst of the barren desert obtains its livelihood, we find the answer in the pearl. The city sends out some 200 pearling-boats each year, which gives employment to thousands of men. The money realized from the pearls forms the capital on which business is conducted for the remainder of the year.



PEARLING BOATS

The pearling business is mostly in the hands of the Arabs, while the trades and business generally are mostly in the hands of the Persians and the Baharanas, for to a lesser extent the city is dependent upon trade. The bazaar counts about 200 shops and is a rather busy place, for it supplies not only the people of the city but also many villages and thousands of Bedouins who come here from the surrounding deserts for their yearly stocks of supplies.

The religious atmosphere is decidedly intense in the place. The spirit of Bahrein, due to the long residence of missionaries and its closer relations with India, is, in comparison, much milder. But Dohah is pretty well shut off from the rest of the world and the inhabitants are for the most part well satisfied that it should be so—they are quite content to be shut up within the narrow limits of their own city and the surrounding deserts and the still narrower limits of their own religion.

a religion that leaves their souls as bare as the desert on which their city is built. But because they know no better they are as unaware of the barrenness of the latter as the former.

The influence of the Wahabites, the straitest of strait sects, who inhabit Central Arabia, can be palpably felt. A considerable number of the inhabitants and visitors are of that persuasion, while the other Sunis show the Wahabite impress very plainly. There is the smug satisfaction that they are the people and wisdom will die with them, that all other religions, including other Muhammadan sects, are destined for the Fire, and a striving for the most literal interpretation of the Koran.

Naturally, the sheikh had not included in his invitation to Dr. Harrison a request for a clergyman to accompany him. Though their reception of me was not exactly cordial, once there they accepted the accomplished face in true Muhammadan fashion, and made no objections, though some felt none too happy about it. They evidently felt that just as the doctor's medicines could not be swallowed without experiencing the accompanying unpleasant taste, so they had better accept the doctor himself though accompanied by a less welcome minister.

The medical work throve from the very start. Though averse to Christian doctrines they were not averse to Christian doses—we hope the latter may pave the way for the former—and patients congregated at the dispensary till the number rose to over one hundred a day. This large number was the more remarkable, because the greater part of the male population was away diving. After ten days when the fasting month of Ramadhan came on and the divers returned, the place was fairly swamped; but this also indicated that it was time for us to leave. It is not wise to do medical work in a new, fanatical place in this month. We would constantly be tempting our patients by ordering them to take medicines in the daytime, thus making them break the fast and causing them more harm religiously than our medicines could ever benefit them physically.

Hence we asked the sheikh's permission to leave, which, under these circumstances, he was nothing loath to give. After the usual delay we got started on our homeward trip, but this time the loss of time in the beginning proved to be more serious, for after the second day out we began to be buffeted by contrary winds. The trip of about one hundred miles, which had taken us only one day coming, was to take eight long, weary days before we got back. A strong northwest wind sprang up, the kind that lasts for several days in these parts when once it begins in earnest, and try as we would, for days at a time, we could not beat around Cape Rukan. Had we but gotten started a day earlier, we might have made it before the wind sprang up. Again and again we tacked, only to find ourselves arriving at about the spot from whence we had started a few hours before. Whole days we lay at anchor in a stormy sea unable to proceed, rocked in the cradle of the deep, to be sure, as only open boats with all sails furled can rock, but far from being soothed in spite of it. You can imagine our feelings when the captain announced that the water was

giving out and that we had to go back to a coast village. We hoisted sail and lost in an hour's time what it had taken us three days' effort to make.

We were told that the name of the village was Garriyah. We landed just in time to assist the sheikh to break the fast at his evening meal—it had been the first day of the fasting month. After this, another man of some importance invited us to his guest-house, where he showed us no common kindness in the way of hospitality, though it must be admitted that the ill-temper and irritability induced by the fast got the better of him sometimes during the course of the next day. We remained at his place that night and the next day. We spent the night on board our boat the next night, but when the morning dawned with a north wind and the captain showed no desire to proceed, we resolved to cross over land from there to Rueis, on the west side of the peninsula, some ten miles distant at that point, hoping to get passage from there. We found Rueis to be a town of some 200 houses, and we were received most kindly by the sheikh. After sundown we also assisted him to break-fast. This delay, though annoying, was not without its advantages. It gave us an opportunity to see these two villages and to get a better insight into the inner life of the Arabs, and more particularly in their attitude toward fasting. As far as we could observe, they did not derive the slightest spiritual benefit from its observance. They strictly, almost heroically, submit to what they freely confess to be a heavy burden, without caring to inquire into the why and wherefore of it all, except that it is a command of Allah, who will punish its disobedience and reward its obedience. In fact, many seem to indulge in occasional fits of ill-will during that month, which they excuse on the strength of it.

We secured a boat to take us to Bahrein without delay. We sailed that night and all the next day, when at times it seemed we would be driven to some village in the south. Happily, the wind changed in the afternoon to a favorable direction and so we got back to Bahrein by midnight. Our experiences had been somewhat trying, but, like Sinbad the sailor, we forget the difficulties of such a trip by sail about as quickly as the misadventures at a picnic, so that by now we can hardly see a departing white-winged sail without the desire to follow it to its destination beyond the horizon.



The Troubles of a Muhammadan Gentleman

MISS JANE A. SCARDEFIELD.

A few years ago I was visiting some Armenian friends in a date-garden near Basrah. Early one evening a messenger came and with many compliments informed us that the owner of the date-garden wished to see me.

"Tell your master," we said to him, "that he should visit the *sahib*, or missionary, in Basrah to-morrow, as it is only the Arab women we wish to talk with, for that is the custom of the country."

The messenger left, but soon returned, and with more elaborate compliments, said,

"My master begs for a few minutes of your time, that he may have your advice, for he is in great trouble."

We then decided that we could all go down and listen to his story of distress, so Naima, her husband and I went out to the garden with lantern in hand. There we met an elderly, dignified Arab gentleman.

"Peace be upon you," he salaamed.

"Upon you be peace and the blessing of Allah," we replied.

"May Allah bless your grandfather and your grandmother, your parents, as well as your husband and children, and likewise increase your wealth and may you be much honored," he said.

"May Allah give peace to your household," we answered.

He continued his kindly salutations for about ten minutes, but finally began his story.

"It is this way, khatun," he said. "When I was a young man, my father obtained a wife for me. I was much pleased with her, for we were nearly of the same age of thirteen years, and my father supported us as we abode in his house.

"When I began business for myself a few years later I took another wife, and put her in a house in the business part of the city. These women did not know each other, and, living far apart, did not become friends. Thus I had peace in each house.

"Then there was a poor cousin of mine, who had to be married soon, as she was almost past the marriageable age of fifteen years. I had just become the owner of the date-garden we are in, and my uncle desired me to marry his daughter. As an honorable Moslem, I could not refuse, so I took a third wife. Allah be praised and on His Prophet peace! This woman was poor and humble, and she became the mother of my three children. All was well, and I prospered and Allah gave me much honor among my friends.

"Then, one day, while drinking coffee with a friend in his shop, our conversation turned to women, and he spoke of one who was very well off as her father had died and her position was great. I at once desired her, and soon I had a fourth wife. This one remained in her own home.

"As I visited each in turn, they were made very happy, for each one understood that she was the best a man could have. Allah be praised and upon the Prophet be peace! I fasted in Ramadhan and worshipped five times a day. I gave alms to the poor and also gave money to three believing Moslems to enable them to perform the pilgrimage to our Holy City of Mecca. Am I not a most excellent man, khatun?" he asked.

We kept silent.

"Praise be to Allah," he went on, "Allah continued my prosperity until my name was well known all up and down this River of the Arabs. As I was returning from prayers in the mosque one Friday evening a friend walked with me. As we talked he spoke of my honor, my big



AN ARAB COFFEE SHOP

name, my good deeds and how pleased Allah was with so honorable a Moslem. Then he spoke of a neighbor's daughter who was living in a village near my date-gardens. She was young and beautiful beyond words, he said, and her father desired only a most honorable gentleman for her, but none was found to suit him.

"As he talked on of her beauty, Allah put it into my heart to take her. What could I do? If Allah willed it, I was helpless. Besides, all my women were now old, and here was a young and handsome woman for whom they desired a most honorable gentleman, and there was none to be found more honorable than myself. But it would have to be done in secret, khatun, for I already had the four wives that my religion allows me. I did not care to divorce any one of them, as the first was the wife of my youth, the second made a home for my noon

rest near my business, the third was my cousin, and the fourth increased my wealth. I communicated these thoughts to my friend, and he said, "Allah be praised! He knows light from darkness and He will arrange all for you."

"We then made an appointment to visit the father of this beautiful woman. When I informed him of my honorable name, my great wealth and my alms-giving, he hesitated to give his daughter to me. But as Allah desired her for me, the father at last consented to let me have her for the sum of 700 Rupees, on condition that the matter be kept from the knowledge of my other women, lest they make her unhappy by their wicked gossip. Thus it was arranged, and we had a big wedding, lasting ten days, for I was marrying a charming young woman of thirteen years.

"'Now,' thought I, 'all is well.' But I had not cash enough on hand to pay all the money—only 300 Rupees—and I had to promise the remainder when the date-season was finished. Then I returned to my first house to inquire how my woman there was, as I had heard she was ill.

"Arriving at the house, I found the outer door shut. I knocked, but there was no response. I knocked louder, but only a little child came.

"'You are not to be admitted,' she informed me, without even opening this door to my honorable self.

"I was angry and left, going direct to my second wife, only to find she was not in.

"'She has gone to her sister's,' I was told, 'and your brother-in-law has sent word that you had better not try to enter his house.'

"Still more angry, I left and hurried to my cousin, the mother of my children. Surely I would have rest and peace there. On arrival, I went straight to the *majlis*, or reception room, of my uncle. His greeting was cold, and when I asked my son about his mother, he said,

"'She has no words for you.'

"This caused me to become more angry, especially as not even a cup of coffee was offered me in my uncle's house.

"I left and went to the home of Khadija, the one who was always pleased to see me, and who often had a gift for me when I visited her. Yes, she would receive me in her room. I entered, and found her and her mother and three other women relatives. I gave her my salaams, but received no response. After a long period of silence her mother spoke, and khatun, I ask forgiveness of Allah! I never heard such words. I could not get up from where I was sitting from fear of those words. Then the other women joined her, and there was no spirit left in me, on account of their much speaking and their loud voices.

"With much trembling I hastened from the house and sought a friend with whom I went to a near-by coffee shop to drink coffee and find rest from the tongues of women. We talked of many things, and when my mind was restored I related to him some of my difficulties.

"'Yes,' said he, with great sympathy, 'I have heard that you have

taken another woman, and perhaps your other women have also heard of it, for gossip is a very wicked thing and often makes enemies even in one's own houses. You should return,' he advised me, 'to your bride and teach all the others it will not be well for them so to treat an honorable man.'

"After going to my friend's house and eating with him, I again journeyed down the river to the home of my friend, the father of the bride. He met me in a friendly manner, and with other friends we had a pleasant conversation. Then he invited me to see him alone in an upper room. After we were seated, he said,

"My friends down below have come for some money I owe them, and so I must ask you to pay me the rest of the money due me now.'

"But I cannot give it to you now,' I answered him, 'but I will give it to you as soon as the date-season comes, just as I told you, and I will give it to you with interest, if you will only wait, for do I not desire your daughter more than any other?' I complimented him. 'Indeed, it will grieve me very much if any unpleasant circumstance mars our happy union, especially now,' I added.

"But he would not listen, again demanding the money, as he needed it to pay his honorable gambling debts, and said if I could not pay at once I must leave. With great grief I left his presence, and now, here I am, khatun, with five wives, and no home to lay my honorable head. What can I do? What would a man in your country do, under such circumstances? My first four wives have become very good friends and thus all my troubles come from their being friends. While they did not know each other I could keep my spirit in peace, but now Allah must help me, for they are all against me, and my head is bowed down. Can you tell me what to do?"

He was much surprised that Christians would be severely punished for having more than one wife, and he went away cursing Christianity and praising Allah that he belonged to the true religion of Muhammad, and declaring,

"Allah will have to be my helper!"



A BEDOUIN MARKET

Arab Women and the War

MRS. JAMES CANTINE

"Why did America enter the war?" we are often asked by the women in Basrah. "We thought you had no quarrel with any one, and hoped that your country might make peace." They are very tired of the war, and talk of little else except the discomforts it is causing them. They compare the difficulties of the present with peace times under Turkish rule, not willing to realize that if the Turks were here now conditions would be a thousand times worse.

It is true that these are trying days for them. Many of them have had to leave their homes in order to make room for the Expeditionary Force. When a good house is wanted for a military billet, the occupants are moved into another house not quite so good. This of



THE ARAB WOMEN CLEANING RICE

course necessitates moving its occupants somewhere else, and so it goes on, one family moving out to make room for another until a comparatively small number live in the houses they occupied before the war. I think most of us would consider this a hardship, but we would probably see the necessity for it, which many of them do not. We try to explain it to them, and tell them what people living in the war areas in Europe are enduring, but their own troubles weigh so heavily that other people's do not make much impression on them, though I have seen women weeping on hearing about the suffering of the Belgians and Armenians. They will not admit, however, that it is the *Turks* who are persecuting and massacring the Armenians, saying that they are quite incapable of such cruelties, and that these reports are slanderous lies, invented by their enemies, and that after the war is over we shall see that they were absolutely false. They do not really be-

lieve this; in fact, the reason for their saying it is that they know only too well how cruel the Turks can be, and secretly fearing that they may come back some day they want to safeguard themselves. The fact that they say these things without fear of the present Government shows that they have already learned to see the difference between the just and kindly rule of the Christian British Government and the cruel misrule of the Moslem Turkish Government. Although scarcely realizing it, these women have begun to enjoy the blessings of Christianity. When the war is over and things become adjusted, they will learn more and more to see the difference between Christian and non-Christian rulers, and may we not hope that this too will help to lead them to recognize that the source of all good is Christ.

Many of the women have husbands or sons in the Turkish army, from whom they have heard no news since the Turks fled from Basrah four years ago. When captured prisoners were marched through the town some weeks ago on their way to a prison camp, the women thronged the streets in the hope of seeing some one of their family or friends. While watching the men pass by, they wailed and beat their breasts, and in other ways expressed their sorrow at the fate which had befallen these their fellow countrymen and co-religionists. The Government is giving financial aid to poor widows and orphans and to others whose bread-winners have left them because of the war.

One thing that the women often speak of as being particularly trying is the lack of consideration for their customs shown by the many Hindus from India who are now living among them. From the roofs and upper stories of adjoining houses these Hindus look down into the women's courtyard. This means that while performing their various household tasks the women must keep their faces covered, for it is a disgrace for a Moslem woman to allow any man except those of her own family to see her face. A respectable Moslem man would probably divorce his wife for that. One woman told me that she had gone to the Governor to complain about their Hindu neighbors annoying them in this way, as it was so difficult to cook food and wash clothes with a veil over one's face. She said that the Governor had been very kind and had put a stop to it, but a few days later these men moved out and a new lot moved in and now they were being annoyed in the same way again. The women appreciate the kindly courtesy of the British soldiers and often say that their own men do not show them as much consideration as these strangers do, which is very true.

The Moslem woman's life is a troublous one, even in normal times. Judged from our standpoint, it is almost too troublous to bear. During my sixteen years in Arabia I have not been in a single Arab home where the relations between a man and his wife were such as a Christian woman could endure. The wife is always more or less of a slave to be beaten or divorced at will. All this she has to accept without questioning, however, for she is taught that "Allah has decreed it." But these added trials which she does not find detailed in the Koran as being part of a Moslem woman's daily life are very hard for her to endure. When we remember how heavy our own hearts often are be-

cause of the sorrow and trials brought about by the war, we can easily understand how these women, who have not yet learned to cast their burden on the Lord, are weighed down by them. A woman said to me not long ago, "If I could be sure that Christ would lift this burden of sorrow and care which I bear day and night, I would come to Him." In these days when the Christian world is sending up much prayer for those who are suffering because of the war, I hope our readers will not forget to pray for this little corner of the war area. We long for the Moslem women to learn that Christ can lift their burden of sorrow and care, and also their greater burden of sin.



Missionary Personalia

In accordance with the arrangements already made and announced providing for Missionaries of the Arabian Mission sharing in the Y. M. C. A. work in Mesopotamia, Rev. G. J. Pennings has commenced his year of service and is proceeding toward Baghdad.

Rev. E. E. Calverley has also taken up his three months of service with the Y. M. C. A. connected with the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Forces, his last letter coming from Makina, Basrah.

Dr. P. W. Harrison, whose visit to the inland capital at Riadh in 1918 attracted so much attention because of its significance, has been invited to make a second trip to this capital, the circumstance of the widespread epidemic of influenza being the immediate occasion of the present visit. The ravages of this disease seem to have spread over the world, countries in Asia suffering especially from its severity.

Dr. and Mrs. Mylrea have recently received a signal evidence of the friendliness of the Sheikh of Kuweit, who has paid a formal visit to the Missionaries at their residence and has given to the Mission a piece of property immediately adjoining the present Mission Compound. This gift involves a piece of land running full length along the Mission Property about three hundred feet, with varying width from forty-five to ninety feet, a very substantial gift and evidence of friendly relations.

Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, who has been serving the Laymen's Missionary Movement during the winter, is to devote the month of April to addresses within our own Denomination. His effective and vigorous co-operation will undoubtedly greatly promote the plans of the Board in the last weeks of the fiscal year.

Dr. Sarah L. Hosmon is now visiting the Women's Auxiliary Societies in the Eastern Churches, having reached New York on the first of March.

Dr. and Mrs. Louis P. Dame, under appointment to the Arabian Mission, have undertaken private practice for a brief period in Porto Rico, where Dr. Dame was connected with the Army Medical Service. It is expected that Dr. and Mrs. Dame will sail for Arabia in the latter part of August.

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